

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 09PANAMA699, MARTINELLI MOUNTS DOMESTIC SPY OPERATION, PUTS DEA

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09PANAMA699**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09PANAMA699	2009-09-18 17:03	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Panama

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/26/112845/cables-offer-dim-view-of-president.html>

VZCZCXYZ0027
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHZP #0699/01 2611703
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 181703Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3750
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2855
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0002
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0657
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 3866
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 2053
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 1586
RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 0452
RUEABND/DEA WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T PANAMA 000699

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2029

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [PM](#)

SUBJECT: MARTINELLI MOUNTS DOMESTIC SPY OPERATION, PUTS DEA
WIRETAP PROGRAM AT RISK

REF: PANAMA 639

Classified By: Ambassador Barbara J. Stephenson for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

Summary

¶1. (S//NF) President Martinelli is following through on his intention to expand the duties of Panama's Council of Public Security and National Defense ("Consejo") to include spying on domestic political enemies (reftel). Martinelli has told the Ambassador that he no longer needs USG help to establish a wiretap program to eavesdrop on his enemies, and that he can do so with help from other sources. He has replaced the director of Consejo and fired some 25 Consejo professionals for alleged links to Consejo's former managers under the Torrijos administration, with indications of more firings to come. Among those fired was the manager of DEA's Matador judicialized wiretap program. The loss of that person and the re-orientation of Consejo to domestic political targets puts at risk the integrity of the Matador program, and we believe that Consejo is no longer an appropriate home for Matador. We are exploring options for transferring control of Matador to Panama's drug prosecutor and removing Consejo from operational involvement in the program. End summary.

Where's the Dirt?

¶2. (S//NF) Following the Ambassador's August 12 meeting in which Martinelli requested USG help with establishing a politically-oriented wiretap program (reftel), the president again raised the subject with Ambassador on September 16. This time, Martinelli announced that he no longer needed USG help to set up his wiretap operation, and that he would be doing so with help from other sources. Martinelli complained that after 75 days in office, he was still not receiving the kind of information he wanted about perceived domestic threats and political enemies. For that reason, he said he had removed Consejo chief Jaime Trujillo and replaced him with Olmedo Alfaro, head of the Institutional Protection Service (SPI), the GOP's VIP protection service. Trujillo will move to SPI and take over Alfaro's position. Martinelli said that Trujillo was a "good guy" who was "completely honest" and had worked for Martinelli for 22 years, but that he could not provide the kind of information the president wanted because he was "too honest." At the same time, Martinelli told Ambassador he had fired 25 Consejo employees because of their connections to former Consejo deputy director Javier Fletcher.

We Can't Help You

¶3. (S//NF) As she had done in the August 12 meeting, the Ambassador made clear to Martinelli that DEA's wiretap program cannot be compromised by involvement with a domestic political surveillance operation. The Ambassador noted that one of those fired was the veteran Consejo staffer who managed the Matador wire room, and she asked whether the president would consider reinstating that person. Martinelli refused, saying that the person had maintained a personal relationship with Fletcher's brother and was therefore untrustworthy.

Who's Sleeping With Whom?

¶4. (S//NF) Separately, DEA chief met with new Consejo head Alfaro on September 16. Alfaro told DEA chief, "I know why you are here. I made some changes and I am not going to

change them." Alfaro said he had orders from the president to find out who "was sleeping with his wife." At the same time, he wanted to make sure he and the president were "covered" and that someone else would be responsible if something bad

happened. He said that he was trying to change the process for approving the judicial wiretaps by bringing a special judge into the wireroom to approve taps. (Comment: This would cut DEA out of the approval process. End Comment.) Alfaro made it clear that Martinelli had tasked him to collect information on the president's political adversaries, and that Trujillo had been removed for failing to deliver what the president wanted.

Comment

15. (S//NF) In light of Martinelli's actions, it is clear to us that Consejo is no longer an appropriate home for the DEA Matador program. We believe it will be more appropriately housed with the office of the drug prosecutor, under Panama's independent Attorney General. We will be discussing options with senior GOP leaders for removing Consejo from operational involvement with Matador, and permanently replacing the fired Consejo manager with a vetted officer from the Attorney General's office. That change of supervision would be the minimum requirement to maintain operation of Matador, and if the GOP does not agree to that change, we will be compelled to suspend operations until a permanent solution can be found.
STEPHENSON